



Cultural Action Plan
Steering Committee Minutes
January 7, 2008

The Salisbury City Council adopted a Resolution of Intent September 4, 2007, to adopt a goal to investigate and create a Cultural Action Plan. On January 7, 2008, a Council-appointed steering committee met for the second time in the Council Chamber at 217 South Main Street to further this goal. Lunch was provided; Joe Morris offered an invocation.

In attendance were: Mayor Susan Kluttz, Councilman Mark Lewis, Joe Morris (Staff Liaison), Mary Berryman Agard (Consultant), Connie Baker, Phillip Burgess, James Donaldson, David Fish, Paul Fisher, Cheryl Goins, Sarah Hall, Joanne Harrison, Sarah Hensley, Rose Meeks Jones, Ruth Chaparro Kennerly, Katie Lipscomb, Betz Bigelow McKeown, James Meacham, Diana Moghrabi, Foster Owen, Doug Paris, Barbara Perry, Eleanor Qadirah, Lynn Raker, Mark Ritchie, David Setzer, Marietta Smith, and Gail Elder White. Faleese Jenkins, Ed Norvell, and Michelle d'Hemecourt were not able to attend the meeting. Arba Knapp and Ralph Barringer attended as interested citizens.

Mayor Kluttz made opening remarks and thanked the committee for their interest and for dedicating their time to this process. "It is very extraordinary how many talented people we have living here in Salisbury."

A few new introductions were made.

- David Fish, associate professor of music, teaches courses on music business, songwriting, the theory of popular music, music technology, and world music at Catawba College. Catawba College is up to 22 majors in this area of popular music and is unique in what it has to offer. "They" will be happy to play for downtown events and are a tremendous resource.
- Rose Meeks Jones is the owner/operator of the downtown wine shop called "The Blue Vine." She came to Salisbury from Tennessee with a background in music and theater. She and her husband are interested in bringing quality music to their shop for evening entertainment. They have had pleasant, diverse crowds enjoying music in their shop on Fridays and Saturdays. She would like to see this grow in Salisbury.
- Ralph Krider Barringer heard about the meeting from the *Salisbury Post* and attended with his niece, Arba Knapp, who moved here in March from Hawaii. His niece bought the "Zimmerman Building" and is currently renovating the building. Mr. Barringer drew a chuckle from the committee as he proclaimed proudly his position as a "town snoop." He is very interested in the outcome of this committee. Ms. Knapp supports arts and also looks forward to the outcome of this committee.

- Ruth Chaparro Kennerly is a City employee in the Human Resources Department who is very active in multiculturalism. She shared with the committee that she plays the piano. Salisbury's culture is growing and showing a great deal of potential.

The remainder of the committee made introductions stating their name only.

Mary Berryman Agard reviewed the agenda and the agenda packet. She expressed her gratitude for the recommendation forms she received for interviewees; she will be conducting those interviews during her visit this week. Some meetings will be group interviews and some are private. (Members received copies of her schedule under separate cover in their agenda packets.) The recommendations from the committee allowed Ms. Agard to form a natural alignment of interests and content for the interviews. She believes that she will learn a great deal about opportunities in each of the sectors which will allow Salisbury to do a better job of offering cultural activities or sustaining activities in place.

Ms. Agard explained that the agendas of the interview meetings are slightly different from one another. She requested that specific steering committee members make her introduction at the various meetings that they will also attend. Joe Morris will introduce Mary at the Downtown Salisbury meeting of the Public Art Committee and Community Appearance Commission; Mark Lewis will make the introduction at the Patrons meeting; Marietta Smith will introduce Mary at the Children and Arts Education meeting since the Rowan Arts Council has made arts education a focus point in their mission statement; James Meacham will make her introduction at the Commerce and Development meeting; Eleanor Qadirah will make her introduction at the performing arts meeting; James Donaldson will make her introduction at the visual arts meeting; Doug Paris will make her introduction for the Volunteers and Community Activists meeting. The specific invitation is to insure that enough people will attend the meetings, but all of the meetings are open to the public and to the steering committee. The secretary will email a list of people who have been invited to attend meetings to the steering committee.

People attending these meetings will receive a one-page explanation of the Cultural Action Plan and contact information. At the heart of the discussion is finding what kinds of contributions they are willing to make, to ask about successes and areas of frustration, and to define times when they felt defeat. The primary focus is on promising aspects and Mary Berryman Agard hopes to bring that wisdom back to the steering committee. Mary will write a generalized report on the experience; these ideas will reach across disciplines.

Based on her experience, Ms. Agard expects, for instance, to hear visual artists say they want to discover or find one another and to come together in arts and education. She expects to find a desire (and ways) for a more integrated arts institution in schools.

James Meacham asked, "Will this be matrixed together?" That would be important to him. Mr. Meacham will invite Robert Van Geons, the new director of the Economic Development Commission (with a theater background), to the meeting of those people aligned with Commerce and Development.

Every neighborhood leader on the City of Salisbury's contact list was invited to the volunteers and civic leaders meeting. Ruth C. Kennerly was invited to specifically address diversity and multiculturalism. There is also economic diversity, religious diversity, age cohorts—there are any number of divisions that can be considered.... In the middle of looking for all the cultural community's strengths, Mary Berryman Agard will be doing some surveying/discussing in March (going back to the cultural institution leaders in the community). She will inquire "who are you serving" and "who remains unserved." "Who" might be by race, or economics and "who" might be personal interest. No one interviewed to date is saying, "I am satisfied with the rapid diversification of my audience." Mary will explore both what is offered and whose culture is reflected?

As to the proportion of public dollars and private donor dollars supporting western European fine-art forms—Europe has a very strong tradition of vast public support, unlike our own. In the United States Symphony, Opera, and Ballet typically consume giant portions of funding (public and private) and marketing. We should be mindful of using culture the way it ought to be used which is as the basis of how human beings connect to each other. That implies being sure our systems of support are grounded in diversity and fairness.

There is a meeting in January (listed below) which is separate from this effort but interesting and supportive.

You are invited to an information session and inventory workshop for Cabarrus and Rowan counties. The Charlotte Regional Partnership, Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority and the Arts & Science Council are working together to develop a new regional tourism product.

WHAT: Regional Trails Meeting

WHERE: Cabarrus County Chamber Building - Kannapolis

WHEN: Tuesday, January 15

TIME: 9:00 – 11:00 am

WHO: Come if you think your site might be eligible to be on a trail, or if you can be a resource for the inventory process – bring a friend!

The themes that we are focusing on are Motor Sports and Adventure, Culinary, and Cultural. Come to this regional meeting and find out more about the project. You can also find out more about the trails and the criteria for each theme at www.purecarolina.com.

For further information please contact Carole Summers Morris at 980-297-5775 or carole@meritage-consulting.com

The Cultural Summit planned by this committee will both showcase a wide range of local cultural resources and provide an opportunity for the consultant to present initial findings and discuss options with the public. It should be designed to foster some cross-fertilization—like performing arts patrons having a chance to sample what is happening in visual arts. The consultant will have some findings by the time of the Cultural Summit. The presentation will focus on the major opportunities that need to be developed and some sketches of the range of ideas for how those opportunities might be developed. At the summit, we engage the participants who are present in structured group activities to pick their brains about those things. Those opportunities can yield wonderful insights and give participants a personal stake. The Summit will need to be planned in a way that allows the showcasing of cultural resources and uses those opportunities to draw participants, but also to engage those attending in contributing to the planning process. Timing of the events activities is important; showcasing cannot be scheduled in competition with the consultant's presentation and the public dialogue aspects of the event. Our challenge is to bring the most diverse population we can bring to this event. That would be a significant challenge. Spanish language capability may be a necessity at this event. Salisbury may have needs for greater visibility. The Arts Summit model could grow into something larger for the future.

Note: "pot luck" food builds community spirit.

CULTURAL SUMMIT COMMITTEE VOLUNTEERS

The following members volunteered January 7, 2008, to participate in the planning of the Cultural Summit Event. This committee will define this event. They will develop a written description of the event. (See the checklist provided in the agenda package.) Joe Morris later scheduled the first committee meeting for January 28, at noon, in the Council Chamber.

Joe Morris-Chair
Lynn Raker
Marietta Smith
Connie Baker
Cheryl Goins
Joanne Harrison
Foster Owen
David Fish
Betz Bigelow McKeown
Barbara Perry
Phillip Burgess
Arba Knapp
James Donaldson
Eleanor Qadirah
Gail Elder White
Ruth Chaparro Kennerly
Katie Setzer Lipscomb

Discussion

Rose Jones suggested that Salisbury needs more signature events. David Fish hoped that the cultural summit event would be scheduled during Catawba's school year. Barbara Perry added that we lose people when colleges are out for the summer. The consultant has noticed a fairly low-level presentation of college students in downtown.

Marietta Smith shared that the plans for "Art on Easy Street", a local art show sponsored by the Rowan Arts Council, is again in its planning stages. Typically they hold the event the third Saturday in June, but they could tie in with the cultural summit. Water Works Visual Arts Center can tie in their family fun day and the event could expand to Liberty Street. It costs less to tie in a creative "umbrella" name for the whole event. Mary thought this sounds promising. This is the kind of idea we need to include. The Arts Council needs to decide soon. Katie Lipscomb noted that the Piedmont Players Theatre has scheduled a May 3 fundraiser.

Salisbury is small enough that we think one thing has to happen at a time, but we are large enough that it has to overlap. Think three-dimensionally—to grow we cannot stay off everyone's toes regarding scheduling. Growth has changed that reality.

For the summit we must define whether this is going to be local or greater. Foster Own described the festival sponsored by Downtown Salisbury, Inc. Resources were such that it was broken down to Lord Salisbury to celebrate the seasons and to fit resources. We want to be gathering very broad public opinion. We want the financial supporters there to hear the authentic thoughts and responses of the people in the community as a basis for any subsequent decision-making they might take about resources and how they are going to invest them. Many of these plans have receptions for elected leaders. This moment, though, is community oriented.

It would take 18 months to plan a signature event; we want to take a modest step with this event and realize that we might want to keep the door open as a test ground for moving ahead and putting the right pieces in place for a regular showcasing event.

The next meeting of the Cultural Action Plan Steering Committee was not scheduled at this time. You will be contacted when a date is set. The Mayor thanked everyone for their contribution to this committee.

The meeting adjourned at 2 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diana Moghrabi
Secretary